

# BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

## MINUTES

**DECEMBER 13, 2012 – 7:30 P.M.**

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT:** Mayor Mobus called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG and a MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, SERVING HOME AND ABROAD**

### ROLL CALL

Joren [P] Black [P] Franklin [P] Pote [P] Nehls [P] Cassidy [A]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, Attorney Albert Cruz, Clerk Michelle DeRocco, and Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Hance.

There were 6 members of the public present.

### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

**1. Administration & Finance** – Councilman Franklin reported the October Revenue Report was favorable and all indications for the November report will be the same. He feels the Borough should meet their projections for the year. There is a Resolution on the agenda this evening for budget transfers, and noted the receipt of the Youth Service Commission grant in the amount of \$5,000. from the Somerset County Freeholders. This Grant is used to fund programs for students during the year. He announced the retirement of four members of the Police Department at the end of this year. He said one has already been replaced and three others will be interviewed next week.

**1. Police** – Councilwoman Joren reiterated that the interviews for the Police positions will be held next week. This past Tuesday Chief Wenzel and Lieutenant Cina attended a seminar on the Nixel communications program. The Police Department now have Twitter, Facebook and the Nixel program in place and they will be putting out a “reverse 911” call to inform residents how to sign up for these programs. The Police Department has received two (2) new vehicles and are in the process of transferring all equipment from the old vehicles. The Department hopes to have the CAD training completed by January 1<sup>st</sup> and have begun to work the budget for next year.

**Public Works** – Councilman Nehls said there have been several meetings with discussions on the storm debris and how to handle it and where it will be put. He said all residents were to have everything out at the curb by December 10<sup>th</sup> and that there will be a lot of mulch available for residents. He is asking residents to be patient because there is still much debris to be collected. Councilman Nehls reported the Committee also discussed sewer fees, and said upon consultation with the Laws and Ordinance Committee, the recommendation is to leave the ordinance as it is, however, consider a new category for institutions, and possibly base the fee on usage.

Mayor Mobus asked Councilman Nehls if the County has contractors in the area for debris clean up and he said they did.

### Buildings and Grounds; Recreation:

**Buildings and Grounds** - No report presented

**Recreation** - No report presented

### 1. Public Affairs:

**Open Space:** Councilman Franklin reported the Committee will not be meeting until January and they hope to have the open space inventory by that time.

**Environmental:** Councilman Franklin reported the Environmental Commission had their meeting on the same evening as the Council meeting - November 26, therefore, he could not attend but was informed they discussed the Sustainable Jersey Status and the committee thought they had enough points for the Bronze Award. Councilman Franklin will check with CFO Bill Hance to confirm this. The committee also discussed the idling.

**Board of Health** – Councilman Black reported he did not attend the meeting last evening but noted that Bruce Ruck, who is a member of the Board Of Health Commission, was here this evening and asked the Council if they would permit him to give a brief report. The Council agreed and Mr. Ruck was asked to give a report. Mr. Ruck stated the Commission discussed, in length, storm related issues, which had also been discussed after the storm last year. He requested the Commission check on how to get residents with medical issues signed up for assistance during an emergency such as this. He questioned how the Commission could further assist the Mayor and Council during these events. Another issue mentioned at the meeting was the possible drug use at the High School. The Commission would like to know if there are drug educational programs at the High School level and if not how they could help institute one. Councilman Nehls stated that the Municipal Alliance Committee would be the group to contact to get more information. Mayor Mobus said the Borough only has one representative on that Committee but could have up to five members. The Board of Health will also be discussing a Tobacco Ordinance next year.

- 0 **Fire** - Councilman Black reported he had spoken with Chief Carlucci today and he will be at our next meeting to report. The Fire Department is finishing their training, and the Chief is checking the inventory and equipment himself.
- 0 **Laws/Ordinances** - Councilman Pote reported the Laws and Ordinance Committee met with Public Works but did not act as a whole. Councilman Nehls mentioned again that the sewer ordinance regarding fees is being reviewed for possible changes – particularly adding a section for commercial properties.

**AAR Review (After Action Review of Superstorm Sandy):** Councilman Pote reported on the meeting which was held on Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Prior to the meeting each group was asked to report on what they considered went well; or not done well within their department; and what other departments did or did not do; and where improvements could be made. Public input was also incorporated in the discussions. Most reports indicated improvements are needed in communication; technology and equipment; policies and procedures. These were then prioritized and put into five general areas:

Procedures: look at and evaluate generators; basic phone service, specifically at police headquarters; general communication; and finally, to check of the welfare of residents, special needs, and where they are.

Mayor Mobus has already taken actions to establish committees for 1) communications; 2) welfare, such as a neighborhood watch program including welfare checks on residents; 3) a committee to evaluate and identify generator needs, efficiencies and deficiencies; 4) coordinate communication with schools in regard to access for possible shelters/warming stations, etc.

Mayor Mobus reported residents asked why the Borough did not postpone or cancel election day and he explained the Borough does not have the authority to do this. The decision had to be made quickly on where to hold the elections and the Mayor commended John Kostic of Watchung Electric for the great job he did in getting everything set up with generators to ensure the polling locations were operational. Flyers were hand delivered to every resident in town. All Borough staff, and service departments, Rescue Squad, Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works, did a wonderful job and he thanked everyone. He also wished to thank Pete Martino's wife, Rosebud, for all her work in keeping everyone well fed and the coffee pot going.

## **REPORTS - OTHER:**

- 0 **Engineer** No report presented
- 0 **Police Chief:** No report presented
- 0 **Fire Department** - No report was presented
- 0 **Rescue Squad** - Don Monetti reported that the Tree of Lights festival went well and was well attended. He thanked the Mayor for participating in their ceremony and leading the countdown. The Squad has accepted two new cadets, Dylan Flynn and Vineeta Reddy. Both are Watchung residents. He reported that at the November business meeting they voted the following to positions: Operations: Captain, Adam Wexler; 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, Rich Young; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, Charles Pivnichny; Operations Sergeant, Scott Otto; Admin. Sergeant, Don Monetti; President, Lysandra Plotkin; Vice President, Denise Wilson; Treasurer, Claire Ohl; Recording Secretary, Jessica Ray; Admin. Secretary, Georgia Glasser-Nehls. There were a total of 43 calls in November with mutual aid given to Plainfield-3, and Warren-1. Top responders for the month were Ali Diecke, Logan Taylor and Lysandra Plotkin.
- 0 **Attorney** – Mr. Cruz had no report but he said there are several issues to discuss during Executive Session this evening.
- 13. **Clerk:** - Clerk Michelle DeRocco had no report but wished everyone a “Happy Holiday”.
- 0 **Administrator:** Tom Atkins reported he was very impressed with the process for the meeting held Monday for the AAR, commending Councilman Pote for doing an amazing job. He said the meeting was well organized. Mr. Atkins wished to thank everyone who responded with their input that attended the meeting.

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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### NEW BUSINESS

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**CONSENT AGENDA:** The Consent Agenda Items listed below were unanimously accepted, following a motion by Council President Joren, a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, “aye.”

Approval of the following Council minutes:  
Minutes of November 26, 2012

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Borough Reports:  
Tax Collector’s Report - October, 2012  
Finance Department Revenue Report - October, 2012  
Police Activity Report - November, 2012

Acknowledging Receipt of the following Correspondence:

Mayor Mobus requested to pull item #67 for separate discussion

- #61 - Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) 12/3/12 Advising of damages incurred by Hurricane Sandy and requesting water conservation c: M & C, TEA, TH
- #62 - Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) 12/3/12 Thanking the Borough and its residents for their patience and understanding throughout the restoration process (Hurricane Sandy) C: M & C, TEA, GG
- #63 - Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) 12/3/12 Explaining that Hurricane Sandy was an unprecedented storm and why restoration was unusually difficult, explaining steps being taken to prevent this in the future, and thanking the Borough and its residents for their patience and understanding throughout the restoration process c: M & C, TEA, GG
- #64 - R. Brody, M. Carroll, M. Ellis, D. Churchill, C. Marques, V. Hartmann, T. Hartmann, K. VandeCastle, T. Sukhu, J. Kuran, L. Franssen 12/3/12 Emails urging the Governing Body to proceed with the proposed Library renovation c: M & C, TEA
- #65 - Township of Warren 12/5/12 Notice of Public Hearing on December 13, 2012 for proposed Ordinance No. 12-22, amending Zoning Code by adding a new section entitled “Keeping of Fowl” c: M & C, TEA, TH, DS
- #66 - Board of Chosen Freeholders 12/6/12 Invitation to attend Annual Reorganization Meeting on Friday, January 4, 2013 at 3:00 PM c: M & C, TEA
- #67 - Louise Lindenmeier 12/10/12 Letter of resignation as a member of the Board of Health, due to work commitments c: M & C, TEA, Bd of Health

Mayor Mobus wished to thank Louise Lindenmeier for her service on the Board of Health and stated if her circumstances change in the future she would be welcome to serve again.

Councilwoman Joren made a motion to accept item #67 with a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, “aye.”

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**CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:** The Consent Agenda Items listed below were unanimously accepted, following a motion by Council President Joren, a second by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, “aye”.

- R1:12/13/12 Authorize Emergency Purchase - Predator Tree Service, S.E. Rose Trucking
- R2: Waive Chapter 2-25.13, and Purchase Over \$2,000. - Sparta Tire
- R3: Purchases Over \$2,000.00 - SHI, A&K Equipment Company, Inc., Gold Type Business Machines, Inc.
- R4: Amend 2012 Budget / Insertion of Special Items of Revenue:  
State of NJ Body Armor Grant  
Somerset County Youth Athletic Grant
- R5: Authorize 2013 Recycling Contract - Somerset County
- R6: Authorize Return of Escrow - As attached
- R7: Authorize Transfer of Vehicle Titles - Surplus Auction / Impounded vehicles

R8: Accept Tree Replacement Plan and Surety Bond - 861 Johnston Drive

R9: Authorize Agreement for Leaf Removal - PMUA

R10: Authorize Bond Reduction - Winter Way Estates

Councilman Nehls clarified R9 explaining it is the Borough's intent to enter into a shared service agreement with the Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority, which will result in a savings of approximately \$800 per year.

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**NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS AND RESOLUTIONS:** Items listed below will be individually addressed and acted upon accordingly. Council reserves the right to refer an item to Committee for further review and discussion.

Councilman Franklin moved R11, a second was made by Councilman Black and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye."

R11:12/13/12 Authorize 2012 Budget Transfers

Proposed Ordinance OR:12/17 entitled "**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING RULE 7, "STANDING COMMITTEES," OF THE RULES OF ORDER OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG TO REMOVE "BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS" AS A SEPARATE STANDING COMMITTEE AND COMBINE IT WITH THE "PUBLIC WORKS" STANDING COMMITTEE.**" was introduced. Councilman Pote moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered. Councilman Pote moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading and directed the Clerk to publish the ordinance and notice of public hearing.

R12: Introduction of Ordinance OR:12/17 -Amend Code / Rules of Order – Standing Committees

The motion was seconded by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye". Public Hearing to be held on December 27, 2012.

Councilman Franklin moved R13, a second was made by Councilman Nehls and upon roll call as follows: Joren, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye", Black, "abstain."

R13: Waive Chapter 2-25.13 - Gray's Florist (3)

#68 - Michael Sammon 11/27/12 Request to waive late fee incurred from payment of taxes after due date and extension - Hurricane Sandy c: M & C, TEA

Councilman Franklin stated that flyers went to each home after the storm and later the information was on the website stating the date of the extension. He recommends the late fee stand and it was the consensus of the Council to deny this request and directed the Clerk to respond the decision to the resident.

Councilman Nehls made a motion to deny this request with a second by Councilwoman Joren and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye".

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**PUBLIC PORTION**

Bruce Ruck, Lakeview Avenue, stated he was very impressed with the Boroughs' Health Officer, Kevin Sumner and suggested the Borough utilize his expertise in the health area and also for information on running a temporary shelter during emergencies.

President Joren moved the following resolution:

R14:12/13/12 Executive Session:  
Contract Negotiations: Levin Properties, L.P.  
Property Negotiations: State of New Jersey - Block 7008, Lots 31.01, 31.02  
Contract Negotiations: County of Somerset - Grant Terms and Conditions  
Contract Negotiations: Shared Services - Borough of North Plainfield,  
Township of GreenBrook

Councilman Nehls seconded the motion and upon roll call the vote was as follows: Joren, Black, Franklin, Pote, Nehls, "aye."

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 P.M.. to the Call of the Chair and to the next meeting scheduled for December 27, 2012 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*MaryAnn Hance*  
Deputy Clerk